United Nations A/AC.96/SR.718

General Assembly

Distr.: General
19 October 2018
English
Original: French

Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Sixty-ninth session

Summary record of the 718th meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 5 October 2018, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Dalil ..... (Afghanistan)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Election of officers

1. **Mr. Onyanga Aparr** (Uganda) nominated Mr. Delmi (Algeria) for the office of Chair of the Executive Committee.

2. **Mr. Anzén** (Sweden) seconded the nomination.

3. *Mr. Delmi (Algeria) was elected Chair of the Executive Committee by acclamation.*

4. **Ms. Van Daalen** (Netherlands) nominated Mr. Muylle (Belgium) for the office of first Vice-Chair of the Committee.

5. **Mr. Doudech** (Tunisia) seconded the nomination.

6. *Mr. Muylle (Belgium) was elected first Vice-Chair of the Committee by acclamation.*

7. **Mr. Gallegos** (Ecuador) nominated Ms. Farani Azevêdo (Brazil) for the office of second Vice-Chair of the Committee.

8. **Mr. Abera** (Ethiopia) seconded the nomination.

9. **Mr. Valero** (Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)) said that his Government was not opposed to the nomination.

10. *Ms. Farani Azevêdo (Brazil) was elected second Vice-Chair of the Committee by acclamation.*

11. **Ms. El Khoury** (Lebanon) nominated Ms. Ayesha for the office of Rapporteur.

12. **Mr. Moreno Gutierrez** (Colombia) seconded the nomination.

13. *Ms. Ayesha (Pakistan) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.*

14. **Mr. Delmi** (Algeria) thanked the members of the Committee for the trust which they had placed in him and assured them of his determination to pursue his predecessors' excellent work. He paid particular tribute to the staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), especially those in the field, who often worked in extremely difficult conditions. He called on all those present never to be indifferent to refugees' fate.

Any other business

15. As no delegation wished to take the floor, this item was considered closed.

Adoption of the draft report of the sixty-ninth session of the Executive Committee
(document without a symbol, distributed in the meeting room)

16. **Mr. Moreno Gutierrez** (Rapporteur), briefly presenting the draft report of the sixty-ninth session, said that sections I and II provided an overview of the proceedings of the session. Section III comprised the decisions adopted by the Executive Committee. The annex contained the Chair's summary of the general debate. The final version of the report would be presented to the Third Committee of the General Assembly as an addendum to the High Commissioner's annual report.

17. *The draft report of the Executive Committee on the work of the sixty-ninth session was adopted.*

18. **Mr. Grandi** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) thanked the outgoing Bureau for its work and the support which it had given him throughout the past year. He warmly congratulated the new Bureau on its election. Mr. Johan Cels, Secretary to the Executive Committee for the past six years, had been appointed UNHCR Representative in Myanmar. Ms. Ellen Hansen would take his place.

19. He emphasized that it was vital to remain optimistic and not to forget that UNHCR was concerned with people, not politics. Although political developments clearly shaped the space in which solutions could emerge, the return of refugees could not be driven by politics. Return was a right which refugees must exercise when they were ready to do so

and which depended on security, legal, administrative, psychological and material considerations. He warmly thanked all those who had taken courageous decisions which had enabled refugees to play their role as a catalyst of a unifying solidarity and humanity which made for greater strength when facing global challenges. He hoped that the exchanges at the current session would inspire everyone to refocus attention on dignity, rights and shared humanity.

20. He was glad that the global compact on refugees had been at the centre of statements, since it had the potential to be transformative, as had been demonstrated by the putting in place of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). The response to refugee crises had changed over the years. Lord Paul Boateng, the Chair of the Africa Challenge Enterprise Fund, who had spoken at a side event during the current session, had drawn attention to the fact that refugees were in a fragile situation, but that they were not in themselves fragile; they were resilient and could be partners in their own future. Reinforcing that resilience and that of the host communities while actively pursuing solutions was the logic driving the compact.

21. If the text's potential was to be fully realized, it would be necessary to learn to speak the language of development actors, of business, of local authorities and of civil society entities, and to find ways of converging on common aims, even from different perspectives. The High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges in December 2018 would offer an opportunity to engage with cities which played a key role in protection and inclusion. 2019 would mark the anniversary of the Organisation of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa and the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention). The Global Refugee Forum, which would be held the same year, should be a significant development. 2018 must be a turning point, a moment when the voices of solidarity and welcome started to find their rightful place and shape political discourse, a moment when shared responsibilities became no longer an aspiration but a set of actions.

22. Following an exchange of courtesies, **the Chair** declared closed the 69th session of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.